

# STAGE 3: Exercises for Your Tummy Muscles Service User Information Leaflet

Produced by: Pelvic Health Physiotherapy Service

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## Progressing your Exercises

This Stage 3 leaflet contains a series of more advanced exercises to continue strengthening your tummy muscles. It is important to progress your exercises slowly within your comfort levels. Listen to your body. If you start stage 3 exercises and notice an increase in discomfort, pain, doming, leaking, or bulging down below please stop these exercises and resume stage 2 exercises or contact your doctor/physiotherapist.

## Safe Exercise Transitions

It is important that you don't put too much strain on your tummy muscles when changing exercises or getting up off the floor.

- 1) When lying on your back with your knees bent, roll on to your side keeping your tummy muscles engaged.
- 2) Breathe out as you push up from your elbow.
- 3) Get onto hands and knees to transition to your next exercise or stand up.
- 4) Do the same in reverse for getting down onto the mat.

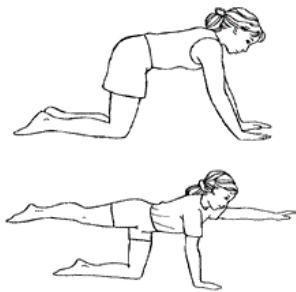
## Further information

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/your-post-pregnancy-body/>  
<https://pogp.csp.org.uk/publications/pelvic-floor-muscle-exercises-women>

## References

THABET, A., ALSHERHRI, M., 2019. Efficacy of deep core stability exercise program in postpartum women with diastasis recti abdominis: a randomised controlled trial. *Journal of Musculoskeletal and Neuronal Interactions*, vol. 19, pp. 62-68.

LEOPOLD, M., SANTIAGO, K., CHENG, J., KELLER, L., ABUTALIB, Z., BONDER, J., SHARMA, G., TENFORDE, A., CASEY, E., 2021. Efficacy of a Core Strengthening Program for Diastasis Rectus Abdominis in Postpartum Woman: A Prospective Observational Study. *Journal of Woman's Health Physical Therapy*, pp. 147-163.



### **Bird Dog**

Start on your hands and knees with your back flat. Place hands under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Gently pull in your tummy muscles and pelvic floor. Lift one arm and opposite leg. Lift only as high as you can whilst controlling the position of your spine.

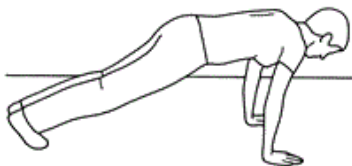
3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week



### **Single Arm Shoulder Pulse**

Lie on your back and hold a weight, soup can, or water bottle in one hand above your head. Place your other hand on your lower tummy. Pulse your arm with the weight up twice as you breath out. Feel your tummy tightening as you lift the weight. Inhale as you lower your arm down to the floor. Repeat on each side.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week



### **Hand walkout**

Start in a standing position, put your hand on the ground in front of your toes (bend your knees if you feel too much of a stretch). Gently pull in your tummy muscles and pelvic floor. Gradually walk your hands forward into plank position. Slowly walk your hands back into the starting position.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week



### **Triceps Extension**

Holding a band or light weight, stand with feet hip width apart, slight bend in your knees. Lean slightly forward at the hips and pull your elbow back so your hand is at your waist. This is your starting position. Straighten your arm back behind you as you breath out. Remember to pull in your tummy muscles as you straighten the arm. Bend your elbows again to return to the starting position. Repeat on both sides.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week

If you feel like challenging yourself and are comfortable with the first 4 exercises, you can add these exercises into your routine.



#### **Plank with knees on the floor**

Start on your hands and knees then balance on your forearms and knees, making sure that your elbows are aligned directly under your shoulders

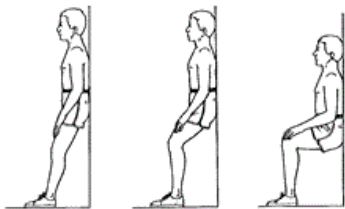
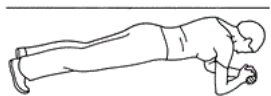
Engage your tummy muscles and try not to let your hips rise or drop.

#### **Plank (Only if feeling strong!)**

Start on your hands and knees then balance on your forearms and toes, making sure that your elbows are aligned directly under your shoulders

Engage your tummy muscles and try not to let your hips rise or drop.

3 sets of 10-30 second holds 3-4 times per week



#### **Wall Sit**

Stand with back against wall, feet shoulder width apart and 18 inches from wall. Gently pull your tummy muscles in.

Slowly slide down wall until you are in a "chair position"

Hold for as long as you can manage.

3 sets 3-4 times per week

## **EXERCISE PROGRAM**

### **Stage 3: STRENGTHENING YOUR TUMMY MUSCLES**



#### **Tummy Crunch**

Start on your back with your knees bent and both feet on the floor. Place your hands behind your ears and elbows out.

Tighten your tummy muscles and lift your head and shoulders off the floor. Take care not to strain your neck.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week



#### **Tummy Twist**

Start on your back with your knees bent and both feet on the floor. Cross your arms at your chest and bring your chest up so that you are in a V shaped position. As you sit up slightly rotate your trunk to one side and come back down to the V-shaped position and continue to alternate from right and left sides.

3 sets of 10 reps 3-4 times per week